

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 16, 2014

Agenda Item: Nevada Lake WMA Clear Creek Addition

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Informational

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP administers the 740-acre Nevada Lake Wildlife Management Area, which is located approximately eight miles southeast of Helmville. The WMA provides crucial elk and deer winter range, as well travel corridor habitat for bears, lynx, and wolverine. The Nature Conservancy purchased an adjacent 760-acre parcel from Plum Creek Real Estate Investment Trust in 2004 to avert potential subdivision and development. TNC intended to retain the property temporarily as a part of the 89,000-acre Blackfoot Community Project. FWP was recently awarded a \$595,000 grant from the Forest Legacy Program intended for purchasing this addition to the WMA (after a number of unfunded grant applications). This project received endorsement by the commission in April 2008. Given the time that has passed and the successful grant, this serves as an update.

The TNC has committed to selling the land to FWP at 75 percent of appraised value, which will provide a 25 percent match for the Forest Legacy grant. This parcel shares the same wildlife habitat values as the WMA and provides a legal access connection between the WMA and USFS lands, which hasn't existed in the past. The parcel is adjacent to the 4,911-acre Dalton Mountain Conservation Easement, also held by FWP.

Public Involvement Process & Results

No formal public process has been initiated for this project. However, when the Forest Legacy Program grant was submitted in 2014, the Forest Legacy Program received 22 letters of support from the local community, neighboring landowners, and from conservation groups.

Alternatives and Analysis

The only viable alternative would be to forego this acquisition project. The parcel was originally targeted by TNC because of the likely threat of future development, which would substantially impact the integrity of Nevada Lake WMA, as well as part of the Dalton Mountain Conservation Easement, directly affecting effectiveness of these wildlife habitats for a variety of priority species.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

This cover sheet serves as an update only.